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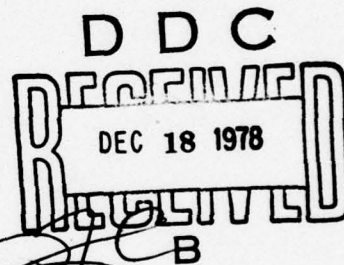
Catalytic Decomposition of Formaldehyde on  
Single Rhodium Atoms

by

J. T. Yates, Jr.<sup>\*</sup>, S. D. Worley<sup>†</sup>, T. M. Duncan, and R. W. Vaughan

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electron donation into  $2\pi^*$ -CO orbitals. Hydride displacement by CO may occur on exposure to CO(g). The conversion of the species  $\text{H-Rh}(\text{CO})_2^+$  to  $\text{H-Rh}(\text{CO})$  has been followed spectroscopically during desorption.

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### Abstract

The interaction of  $\text{H}_2\text{CO}$  with alumina-supported Rh has been studied by transmission infrared spectroscopy. It has been shown that isolated Rh atoms catalyze the decomposition of  $\text{H}_2\text{CO}$  to produce carbonyl hydride species  $\text{H}_x\text{Rh-CO}$  ( $x = 1,2$ ). Species of the type  $\text{Rh(HCO)}$  and  $\text{Rh(HCOH)}$  are not observed to form in detectable amounts. Hydride bonding to rhodium carbonyl species is associated with electron donation to Rh causing a decrease in  $\tilde{\nu}_{\text{CO}}$  due to electron donation into  $2\pi^*$ -CO orbitals. Hydride displacement by CO may occur on exposure to  $\text{CO(g)}$ . The conversion of the species  $\text{H-Rh(CO)}_2$  to  $\text{H-Rh(CO)}$  has been followed spectroscopically during desorption.

## I. Introduction

In a previous paper<sup>(1)</sup> we have used infrared spectroscopy to characterize the chemisorption of CO on highly dispersed Rh atoms supported on high-area  $\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3$ . This work forms a foundation for the present study of formaldehyde chemisorption on similar Rh surfaces.

Rh is a very active catalyst for the production of  $\text{CH}_4$  from  $\text{H}_2 + \text{CO}$ , the catalytic methanation reaction<sup>(2-4)</sup>. It has been postulated<sup>(2)</sup> that intermediates such as  $\text{HCO}(\text{ads})$  or  $\text{HCOH}(\text{ads})$  may be involved in catalytic methanation. Therefore, in this work a spectroscopic search for these species was undertaken using  $\text{H}_2\text{CO}$  as the adsorbate. In related work on single crystals of W and Ru, it has been observed that small quantities of  $\text{CH}_4$  are produced by thermal desorption following adsorption of  $\text{H}_2\text{CO}$ <sup>(5-10)</sup>. Both W and Ru are active catalysts for the methanation reaction<sup>(11,2)</sup>, and the observation of  $\text{CH}_4$  production from  $\text{H}_2\text{CO}$  has given support to the hypothesis that intermediates derived from  $\text{H}_2\text{CO}$  may also be present in the reaction of  $\text{H}_2 + \text{CO}$  to yield  $\text{CH}_4$ .

The chemisorption of  $\text{H}_2\text{CO}$  by metals has been previously studied<sup>(5-14)</sup>, but no definitive vibrational spectroscopic work has been reported for surface species derived from this molecule.

## II. Experimental

The experimental apparatus and the infrared spectrometer have been described previously<sup>(1)</sup>. Highly dispersed Rh supported on  $\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3$  was prepared as described earlier<sup>(1,4)</sup> by reduction of highly dispersed  $\text{RhCl}_3$  on  $\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3$  using  $\text{H}_2$  at  $150^\circ \text{C}$ .  $\text{H}_2\text{CO}(\text{g})$  was prepared<sup>(5)</sup> by heating paraformaldehyde in a glass generator at  $80^\circ \text{C}$ , passing the gas through a glass trap at 195 K, and directly admitting the  $\text{H}_2\text{CO}(\text{g})$  to the stainless steel manifold. At  $\text{H}_2\text{CO}$  pressures as high as 5 torr, little



difficulty was encountered with polymerization loss at the vacuum system walls as judged by the constancy ( $\sim 2\%$ ) of  $\text{H}_2\text{CO(g)}$  pressure in the isolated manifold for times of the order of minutes. This method of producing  $\text{H}_2\text{CO(g)}$  from paraformaldehyde has been checked mass-spectrometrically and was found to produce pure  $\text{H}_2\text{CO}^{(5)}$ .  $\text{D}_2\text{CO(g)}$  was prepared as above from completely deuterated paraformaldehyde obtained from Merck Isotopes.

### III. Experimental Results

#### A. $\text{H}_2\text{CO}$ Adsorption of Rh

Figure 1A shows the spectral developments which occur as successive quantities of  $\text{H}_2\text{CO}$  are adsorbed on Rh. It may be seen that at lowest  $\text{H}_2\text{CO}$  exposures a band near  $1860\text{ cm}^{-1}$  and a band near  $2038\text{ cm}^{-1}$  develop. As the  $\text{H}_2\text{CO}$  exposure is increased, there is an indication of three overlapping features at  $2026\text{ cm}^{-1}$ ,  $2048\text{ cm}^{-1}$ , and  $2066\text{ cm}^{-1}$ , as well as a small sharp band near  $2100\text{ cm}^{-1}$ . This spectrum is distinctly different from the spectrum of  $^{12}\text{CO}$  on Rh (see reference 1, Figure 3), where a strong doublet feature at  $2101\text{ cm}^{-1}$  and  $2031\text{ cm}^{-1}$  is dominant at comparable levels of CO exposure.

It was important to determine whether Rh was acting as a catalyst for decomposition of  $\text{H}_2\text{CO(g)}$  into  $\text{H}_2\text{(g)}$  and  $\text{CO(g)}$ . If this were true, then the spectra of Figure 1A could be attributed to competition between  $\text{H}_2\text{(g)}$  and  $\text{CO(g)}$  for adsorption sites, and the absence of the doublet feature obtained with pure CO could be attributed to this competition. Therefore, the experiment shown in Figure 1A was repeated on a freshly prepared Rh surface using an equimolar  $\text{H}_2 + \text{CO}$  mixture instead of  $\text{H}_2\text{CO(g)}$  as the adsorbate. The results are shown in Figure 1B where the dosage of the  $\text{H}_2 + \text{CO}$  mixture has been made equivalent to the  $\text{H}_2\text{CO(g)}$  dosage used in Figure 1A for each spectrum, a through e. Spectral developments using the  $\text{H}_2 + \text{CO}$  mixture are very similar to those observed for pure CO

adsorption. The major differences observed in comparison of the spectra in Figures 1A and 1B indicate that  $\text{H}_2\text{CO(g)}$  does not behave in a fashion resembling  $\text{H}_2\text{(g)} + \text{CO(g)}$  during chemisorption on Rh.

Since the doublet feature characteristic of pure CO adsorption on Rh was strongly retarded in its development with  $\text{H}_2\text{CO}$  as the adsorbing species, we attempted to see whether the doublet would develop by adsorbing CO following high exposures of  $\text{H}_2\text{CO}$  on Rh. This procedure caused the development of new spectral features as shown in Figure 2. Extensive development of the doublet occurs as well as some growth of features at  $\sim 2060\text{ cm}^{-1}$  and  $1880\text{ cm}^{-1}$ .

#### B. $\text{D}_2\text{CO}$ Adsorption on Rh

In order to determine whether hydrogen motions exist in any of the vibrational features observed as a result of  $\text{H}_2\text{CO}$  adsorption, the adsorption of  $\text{D}_2\text{CO}$  was undertaken. These results are given in Figure 3 where the  $\text{D}_2\text{CO}$  dosages are equivalent to those used for  $\text{H}_2\text{CO}$  in Figure 1A. There is no difference in the  $\text{D}_2\text{CO}$  and the  $\text{H}_2\text{CO}$ -derived spectra. The agreement between the frequencies for  $\text{H}_2\text{CO}$ - and  $\text{D}_2\text{CO}$ -derived species proves that the adsorbed species observed here do not involve hydrogen bonded to either C or O.

#### C. Desorption from Rh Exposed to $\text{D}_2\text{CO}$

Previous studies have shown that thermal desorption from pure CO layers on Rh is entirely reversible at  $T \leq 336\text{ K}^{(1)}$ . A similar study was performed on a Rh surface which had been exposed to  $\text{D}_2\text{CO}$ . The results shown in Figure 4 are strikingly different from the pure CO results since an interconversion between different adsorbed species is indicated by the significant increase in absorbance near  $2048\text{ cm}^{-1}$  as the doublet features at  $\sim 2090\text{ cm}^{-1}$  and  $\sim 2018\text{ cm}^{-1}$  disappear during desorption. In the lower portion of Figure 4,

difference spectra are presented which clearly show this interconversion effect.

#### D. Search for Other $\text{H}_2\text{CO}$ -derived Chemisorbed Species on Rh

A comparison of the adsorption of  $\text{H}_2\text{CO}$  on  $\text{Rh}/\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3$  and on  $\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3$  was made in the  $4000\text{ cm}^{-1}$  to  $1000\text{ cm}^{-1}$  region. A number of new spectral features were detected upon exposure to  $\text{H}_2\text{CO}$  but in each case the new feature was associated with  $\text{H}_2\text{CO}$  adsorption on  $\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3$  except for those features shown in Figure 1A.

#### E. Evidence for $\text{H}_2$ Evolution during $\text{H}_2\text{CO}$ Chemisorption on Rh

During the  $\text{H}_2\text{CO}$  exposures which produced the spectra a - e in Figure 1A, it was noted that the pressure within the adsorption cell and the manifold did not decrease below ~20-30% of its initial value. Similar dosages of CO would have been accompanied by a pressure drop to ~5% of the initial pressure. We suspect that this behavior is due to  $\text{H}_2(\text{g})$  evolution as  $\text{H}_2\text{CO}$  is decomposed on Rh.

#### F. Search for Rh-H Absorption Bands Following $\text{H}_2$ Adsorption

Infrared spectra were measured in the  $4000\text{ cm}^{-1}$  to  $1000\text{ cm}^{-1}$  region with both ~50 torr and ~500 torr of  $\text{H}_2$  above the Rh surface at 295 K. No spectral bands due to  $\text{H}_2$  chemisorption were detected. The accuracy of these measurements is such that an absorbance change of  $<0.02$  could have been detected easily.

### IV. Discussion

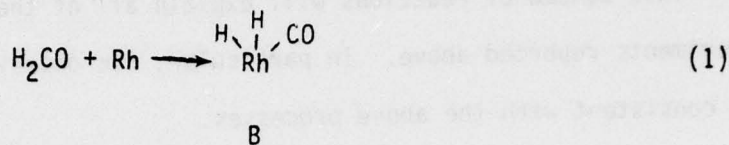
#### A. Assignment of IR Spectral Features - Interaction of $\text{H}_2\text{CO}$ with Rh

By virtue of the observation of several spectral features in the CO stretching region (and the lack of CH and OH bands) a tentative assignment of  $\text{H}_2\text{CO}$ -derived adsorbed species and their vibrational frequencies may be made (Table I).

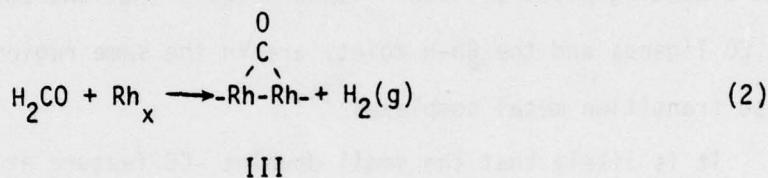


We suggest that the following surface processes occur when  $\text{H}_2\text{CO}$  adsorbs on various Rh sites which are present together on the supported catalyst<sup>(1)</sup>.

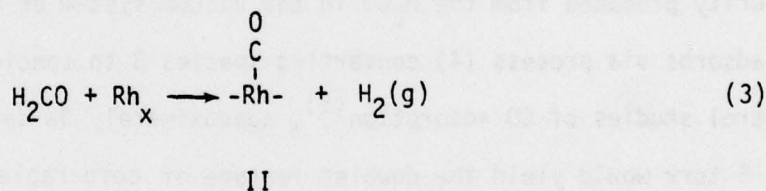
Isolated Rh Atom Sites



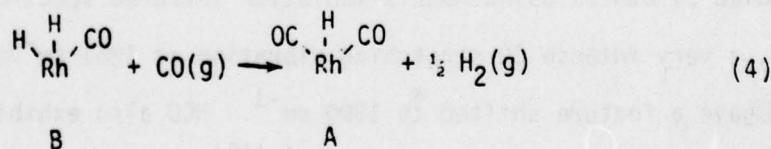
Rh<sub>x</sub> Sites



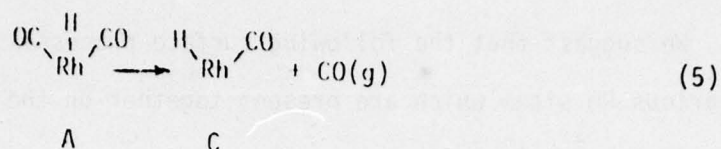
and



When additional CO is adsorbed on the Rh surface following  $\text{H}_2\text{CO}$  adsorption, the following hydrogen-displacement process takes place:



Finally, when thermal desorption occurs, the first step is:



This scheme of reactions will explain all of the effects observed in our experiments reported above. In particular, the observations tabulated in Table II are consistent with the above processes.

Several transition metal complexes of Rh containing the hydride and CO functional groups simultaneously, as well as other ligands, have been prepared. Thus, our proposed intermediate species A, B, and C would seem to be reasonable from a bonding point of view. It is notable that the stretching frequencies for the CO ligands and the Rh-H moiety are in the same region (ca.  $2000 \text{ cm}^{-1}$ ) for these transition metal complexes<sup>(14)</sup>.

It is likely that the small doublet -CO feature at  $2096 \text{ cm}^{-1}$  and  $2026 \text{ cm}^{-1}$  which was seen following exposure to  $\text{H}_2\text{CO(g)}$  at  $\sim 5$  torr is due to traces of CO impurity produced from the  $\text{H}_2\text{CO}$  in the vacuum system or on the Rh catalyst. This CO adsorbs via process (4) converting species B to species A. Based on control studies of CO adsorption<sup>(1)</sup>, approximately 3% decomposition of  $\text{H}_2\text{CO}$  at  $\sim 5$  torr would yield the doublet feature of comparable intensity to that measured in Figure 1A, spectrum e.

#### B. Absence of Detectable Surface Coverages of HCO(ads) or HCOH(ads)

The infrared spectra of  $\dot{\text{HCO}}$  and  $\dot{\text{DCO}}$  (the formyl radical) have been studied by others using matrix-isolation infrared spectroscopy<sup>(15)</sup>. For  $\dot{\text{HCO}}$ , a very intense CO stretching vibration at  $1861 \text{ cm}^{-1}$  was observed, whereas  $\dot{\text{DCO}}$  gave a feature shifted to  $1800 \text{ cm}^{-1}$ .  $\dot{\text{HCO}}$  also exhibited an abnormally low C-H stretching vibration at  $2488 \text{ cm}^{-1}$  (15).

We can eliminate HCO(ads) and HCOH(ads) as being present on Rh at 295 K in concentrations measurable by infrared spectroscopy on the following basis:

1. Evidence against HCO(ads) on Rh.

- i. No new spectral features near or below  $1861 \text{ cm}^{-1}$  were observed in comparing  $\text{H}_2\text{CO}$  with CO adsorption on Rh.
- ii. No shift in any C-O stretching vibration due to deuterium labeling of formaldehyde was observed.

2. Evidence against HCOH(ads) on Rh.

- i. No new C-H or O-H stretching vibrations were observed following  $\text{H}_2\text{CO}$  adsorption on Rh.
- ii. No shift in any C-O stretching vibration due to deuterium labeling of formaldehyde was observed.

C. Vibration of the H-Rh-CO Species - Evidence for Rhodium Carbonyl Hydride Species Derived from  $\text{H}_2\text{CO}$

Two factors must be considered in discussing the variation of  $\tilde{\nu}\text{-CO}$  following the introduction of hydrogen ligands to Rh. The first of these is the mechanical effect on  $\tilde{\nu}\text{-CO}$  caused by bonding of hydrogen to Rh. Effects of this kind have been considered formally by Adel<sup>(16)</sup>. For the linear oscillator,

$$\text{Rh} \begin{array}{c} k_{12} \\ m_1 \end{array} \text{C} \begin{array}{c} k_{23} \\ m_2 \end{array} \text{O} \begin{array}{c} \\ m_3 \end{array},$$

the addition of a hydrogen atom to  $m_1$  may be considered to cause a change of  $\Delta m_1 = 1 \text{ amu}$  at  $m_1$ . For the two stretching frequencies  $\omega_{23}$  and  $\omega_{12}$ , the fractional shifts in frequency are given by:

$$\frac{d\omega_{23}}{\omega_{23}} = \frac{\left[ \frac{-k_{12} k_{23}}{\mu_{23}} \left( \frac{dm_1}{m_1^2} \right) - \left\{ (2\pi\omega_{23})^2 + (2\pi\omega_{12})^2 \right\} \left\{ -k_{12} \left( \frac{dm_1}{m_1^2} \right) \right\} \right]}{2(2\pi\omega_{23})^2 \left[ (2\pi\omega_{23})^2 - (2\pi\omega_{12})^2 \right]} \quad (6)$$



and,

$$\frac{d\omega_{12}}{\omega_{12}} = \frac{\left[ \frac{-k_{12} k_{23}}{\mu_{23}} \left( \frac{dm_1}{m_1} \right) - \left\{ (2\pi\omega_{12})^2 + (2\pi\omega_3)^2 \right\} \left\{ -k_{12} \left( \frac{dm_1}{m_1} \right) \right\} \right]}{2(2\pi\omega_{12})^2 \left[ (2\pi\omega_{12})^2 - (2\pi\omega_{23})^2 \right]} \quad (7)$$

where  $k_{ij}$  = force constant for bond stretching (dynes  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ).

$\omega_{12}$  = "metal-carbon" stretching frequency ( $\text{sec}^{-1}$ ).

$\omega_{23}$  = "carbon-oxygen" stretching frequency ( $\text{sec}^{-1}$ ).

$\omega_3$  = "bending" frequency ( $\text{sec}^{-1}$ ).

$$\mu_{ij} = \frac{m_i m_j}{m_i + m_j}$$

We assume typical values of  $\omega_{12}$ ,  $\omega_{23}$ ,  $\omega_3$ , and  $k_{ij}$  as found for metal carbonyls<sup>(17)</sup>.

For  $\tilde{\nu}_{23} \approx 2000 \text{ cm}^{-1}$ ,  $\omega_{23} \approx 6 \times 10^{13} \text{ sec}^{-1}$ ; for  $\tilde{\nu}_{12} \approx \tilde{\nu}_3 \approx 400 \text{ cm}^{-1}$ ,  $\omega_{12} \approx \omega_3 \approx 1.2 \times 10^{13} \text{ sec}^{-1}$ . Also,  $k_{23} \approx 17 \times 10^5 \text{ dynes cm}^{-1}$ , and  $k_{12} \approx 3 \times 10^5 \text{ dynes cm}^{-1}$ .

For  $\Delta m_1 = 1 \text{ amu}$ , equations (6) and (7) yield  $\frac{d\omega_{23}}{\omega_{23}} = -6 \times 10^{-6}$  and

$\frac{d\omega_{12}}{\omega_{12}} = +8 \times 10^{-4}$ . Thus, for the addition of a single H to Rh,  $d\tilde{\nu}_{23} \approx -.012 \text{ cm}^{-1}$

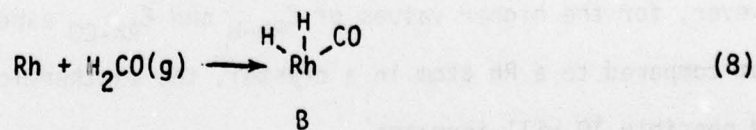
and  $d\tilde{\nu}_{12} \approx 0.32 \text{ cm}^{-1}$ . The mechanical effect of hydrogen substitution on  $\tilde{\nu}_{\text{CO}}$  is therefore entirely negligible and would not be observable. Also, a deuterium isotope effect would not be seen.

The second factor concerning hydrogen addition to Rh and the resultant changes in  $\tilde{\nu}_{\text{CO}}$  is the electronic influence of H ligand(s) on Rh and hence on the CO ligand. It is generally accepted that hydrogen bound to the metal atom of a carbonyl will be electron donating<sup>(18,19)</sup>. This will reduce carbonyl

stretching parameters. Thus,  $\sigma$ -donation of electrons from H to Rh would be expected to increase  $\pi$ -donation from the metal into the antibonding  $2\pi^*$ -CO orbitals leading to a decrease in  $k_{23}$  and in  $\tilde{\nu}_{\text{CO}}$ . Such effects might be expected to yield  $\sim 10 \text{ cm}^{-1}$  downward shifts in  $\tilde{\nu}_{\text{CO}}$  based on comparison of metal carbonyls containing ligands of varying electron donating ability<sup>(20)</sup>. In each case in Table I where a Rh-carbonyl-hydride species is compared with its non-hydride counterpart, it is seen that  $\tilde{\nu}_{\text{CO}}$  decreases by 5-10  $\text{cm}^{-1}$  for each hydrogen ligand added. These significantly lower  $\tilde{\nu}_{\text{CO}}$  values measured for  $\text{H}_2\text{CO}$ -derived species on Rh compared to CO-derived species on Rh leave little doubt that  $\text{H}_2\text{CO}$  adsorption on Rh yields carbonyl hydride species A, B, and C. There are many examples of analogous metal carbonyl hydride molecules of known structure<sup>(21)</sup>.

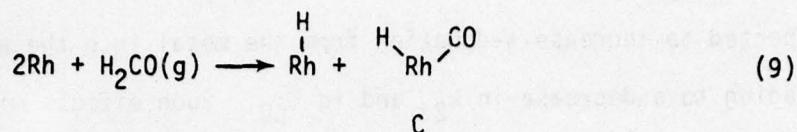
D. Thermodynamic Estimate of the Energetics of the Reaction of  $\text{H}_2\text{CO}$  with a Rh Atom

An estimate of the Rh-CO and the Rh-H bond strength can be made using desorption activation energies,  $E_d$ , from Rh single crystal surfaces. For  $\text{H}_2(\text{g})$  desorption from Rh(111),  $E_d^{\text{H}_2} \approx \Delta H \approx 19 \text{ kcal mole}^{-1}$ (22). For CO desorption from Rh(111),  $E_d^{\text{CO}} \approx \Delta H \approx 35 \text{ kcal mole}^{-1}$ (23). On this basis, the bond strengths are estimated to be  $E_{\text{Rh-H}} = 61.6 \text{ kcal mole}^{-1}$  and  $E_{\text{Rh-CO}} = 35 \text{ kcal mole}^{-1}$ . Therefore, for the reaction:



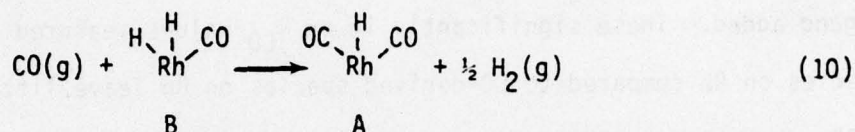
$$\Delta H_{(8)} \approx -2E_{\text{Rh-H}} - E_{\text{Rh-CO}} + D_{\text{H}_2}^0 - \Delta H_{\text{H}_2\text{CO}(\text{g})}^f = -26.3 \text{ kcal mole}^{-1}.$$

For the reaction:



$$\Delta H_{(9)} \approx -26.3 \text{ kcal mole}^{-1}.$$

For the ligand exchange process:



$$\Delta H_{(10)} \approx E_{\text{Rh-H}} - E_{\text{Rh-CO}} - \frac{1}{2} D_{\text{H}_2}^0 = -25.5 \text{ kcal mole}^{-1}.$$

Thus, all of the spontaneous processes observed in this work are expected to be exothermic and probably irreversible at 295 K and at the pressures employed here.

These thermodynamic estimates are inexact for two reasons:

- (1) an isolated Rh atom will differ in its energetics from a Rh atom in a single crystal;
- (2) additivity of bond energies is an inexact approximation.

However, for the higher values of  $E_{\text{Rh-H}}$  and  $E_{\text{Rh-CO}}$  expected for an isolated Rh atom compared to a Rh atom in a crystal, the exothermicity of processes 8, 9, and possibly 10 will increase.



## V. Summary

The following features of  $\text{H}_2\text{CO}$  dissociative chemisorption on isolated Rh atoms have been found:

1.  $\text{H}_2\text{CO}$  chemisorbs dissociatively on isolated Rh atoms to produce carbonyl-hydride species containing a single CO ligand and one or two H ligands.
2.  $\text{HCOH(ads)}$  and  $\text{HCO(ads)}$  species are not observed to form from  $\text{H}_2\text{CO}$  on Rh at 295 K.
3. Hydride bonding to Rh-carbonyl species is associated with electron donation to the Rh causing a decrease in  $\tilde{\nu}_{\text{CO}}$  in accordance with expectations for electron donation into  $2\pi^*$ -CO orbitals.
4. Hydride displacement by CO ligands may occur on Rh-carbonyl-hydride species by exposure to  $\text{CO(g)}$  at 295 K.
5. Thermal desorption from  $\text{OC} \begin{array}{c} \text{H} \\ | \\ \text{Rh} \end{array} \text{CO}$  involves loss of CO to yield  $\text{H} \begin{array}{c} \text{H} \\ | \\ \text{Rh} \end{array} \text{CO}$ .
6.  $\text{H}_2\text{CO}$  interaction with supported Rh atoms involves specific bond-breaking and new bond formation which cannot be achieved by coadsorption of equimolar mixtures of  $\text{H}_2$  and CO.

## VI. Acknowledgment

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TABLE I

Assignment of IR Spectral Features for  
Species Produced by  $\text{H}_2\text{CO}$  or CO on Rh

<u>Species</u>	<u>Wavenumber (<math>\text{cm}^{-1}</math>)</u>	<u>Designation</u>
$\begin{array}{c} \text{OC} \quad \text{CO} \\ \diagdown \quad \diagup \\ \text{Rh} \end{array}$	2101 (sym) 2031 (asym)	I (ref. 1)
$\begin{array}{c} \text{OC} \quad \text{H} \quad \text{CO} \\ \diagdown \quad   \quad \diagup \\ \text{Rh} \end{array}$	~2092 (sym) ~2025 (asym)	A
$\begin{array}{c} \text{H} \quad \text{H} \quad \text{CO} \\ \diagdown \quad   \quad \diagup \\ \text{Rh} \end{array}$	~2038	B
$\begin{array}{c} \text{H} \quad \text{CO} \\ \diagdown \quad \diagup \\ \text{Rh} \end{array}$	~2048	C
$\begin{array}{c} \text{O} \\   \\ \text{C} \\   \\ \text{-Rh-} \end{array}$	2058 - 2070	II (ref. 1)
$\begin{array}{c} \text{O} \\   \\ \text{C} \\ / \quad \backslash \\ \text{-Rh-Rh-} \end{array}$	~1860	III (ref. 1)

TABLE II

Spectroscopic Observations for  $\text{H}_2\text{CO}$  Adsorption on Rh

<u>Observation</u>	<u>Rationale</u>
1. Lack of intense doublet-CO bands with $\text{H}_2\text{CO}$ as adsorbate in contradistinction to pure CO adsorption.	1. Process (1) yields species B; CO adsorption yields species I.
2. Presence of species associated with lower $\tilde{\nu}$ -CO-singlet-bands than pure CO will produce.	2. Process (1) yields species B; CO adsorption yields species II.
3. <u>Shifted</u> doublet produced by CO adsorption following $\text{H}_2\text{CO}$ adsorption.	3. Process (4) yields species A; CO adsorption yields species I.
4. Interconversion of doublet-CO species to species with $\tilde{\nu}$ -CO near $2048\text{ cm}^{-1}$ as desorption occurs.	4. Process (5) yields species C as species A loses a CO ligand.
5. Presence of an $1860\text{ cm}^{-1}$ species following $\text{H}_2\text{CO}$ adsorption.	5. Process (2) occurs for both $\text{H}_2\text{CO}$ and CO adsorption.
6. Evolution of $\text{H}_2$ during $\text{H}_2\text{CO}$ adsorption/decomposition on Rh.	6. Processes (2), (3), and (4) occur for $\text{H}_2\text{CO}$ adsorption, yielding $\text{H}_2(\text{g})$ .

### Figure Captions

Figure 1. Comparison of adsorption from  $\text{H}_2\text{CO}$  and equimolar  $\text{H}_2 + \text{CO}$  on Rh.

T = 295 K.

#### A. $\text{H}_2\text{CO}$ Adsorption

Spectrum (a).  $1.04 \times 10^{18}$   $\text{H}_2\text{CO}$  molecules added

Spectrum (b).  $1.05 \times 10^{18}$   $\text{H}_2\text{CO}$  molecules added

Spectrum (c).  $2.12 \times 10^{18}$   $\text{H}_2\text{CO}$  molecules added

Spectrum (d).  $2.63 \times 10^{18}$   $\text{H}_2\text{CO}$  molecules added

Spectrum (e).  $5.21 \times 10^{18}$   $\text{H}_2\text{CO}$  molecules added.

#### B. Equimolar $\text{H}_2 + \text{CO}$ Adsorption

Spectrum (a).  $1.11 \times 10^{18}$   $\text{H}_2 + \text{CO}$  molecules added

Spectrum (b).  $1.09 \times 10^{18}$   $\text{H}_2 + \text{CO}$  molecules added

Spectrum (c).  $2.36 \times 10^{18}$   $\text{H}_2 + \text{CO}$  molecules added

Spectrum (d).  $2.75 \times 10^{18}$   $\text{H}_2 + \text{CO}$  molecules added

Spectrum (e).  $5.19 \times 10^{18}$   $\text{H}_2 + \text{CO}$  molecules added

Figure 2. Site filling by CO following full coverage from  $\text{H}_2\text{CO}$ . T = 295 K.

Spectrum (a). Full coverage  $\text{H}_2\text{CO}$  followed by 60 minutes pumping.

Spectrum (b). Addition of ~50 torr CO to (a).

Figure 3.  $\text{D}_2\text{CO}$  adsorption on Rh. T = 295 K.

Spectrum (a).  $1.02 \times 10^{18}$   $\text{D}_2\text{CO}$  molecules added

Spectrum (b).  $1.08 \times 10^{18}$   $\text{D}_2\text{CO}$  molecules added

Spectrum (c).  $2.08 \times 10^{18}$   $\text{D}_2\text{CO}$  molecules added

Spectrum (d).  $2.62 \times 10^{18}$   $\text{D}_2\text{CO}$  molecules added

Spectrum (e).  $5.25 \times 10^{18}$   $\text{D}_2\text{CO}$  molecules added



Figure 4. Desorption from Rh exposed to  $D_2CO$

Spectrum (a). Full coverage of  $D_2CO$

Spectrum (b). Follows 120 hours desorption at 295 K

Spectrum (c). Follows additional 9 hours desorption at 316 K

Lower section. Difference spectra obtained by spectrum subtraction as shown

COMPARISON OF ADSORPTION FROM  $\text{H}_2\text{CO}$  AND EQUIOMOLAR  $\text{H}_2+\text{CO}$  ON Rh.

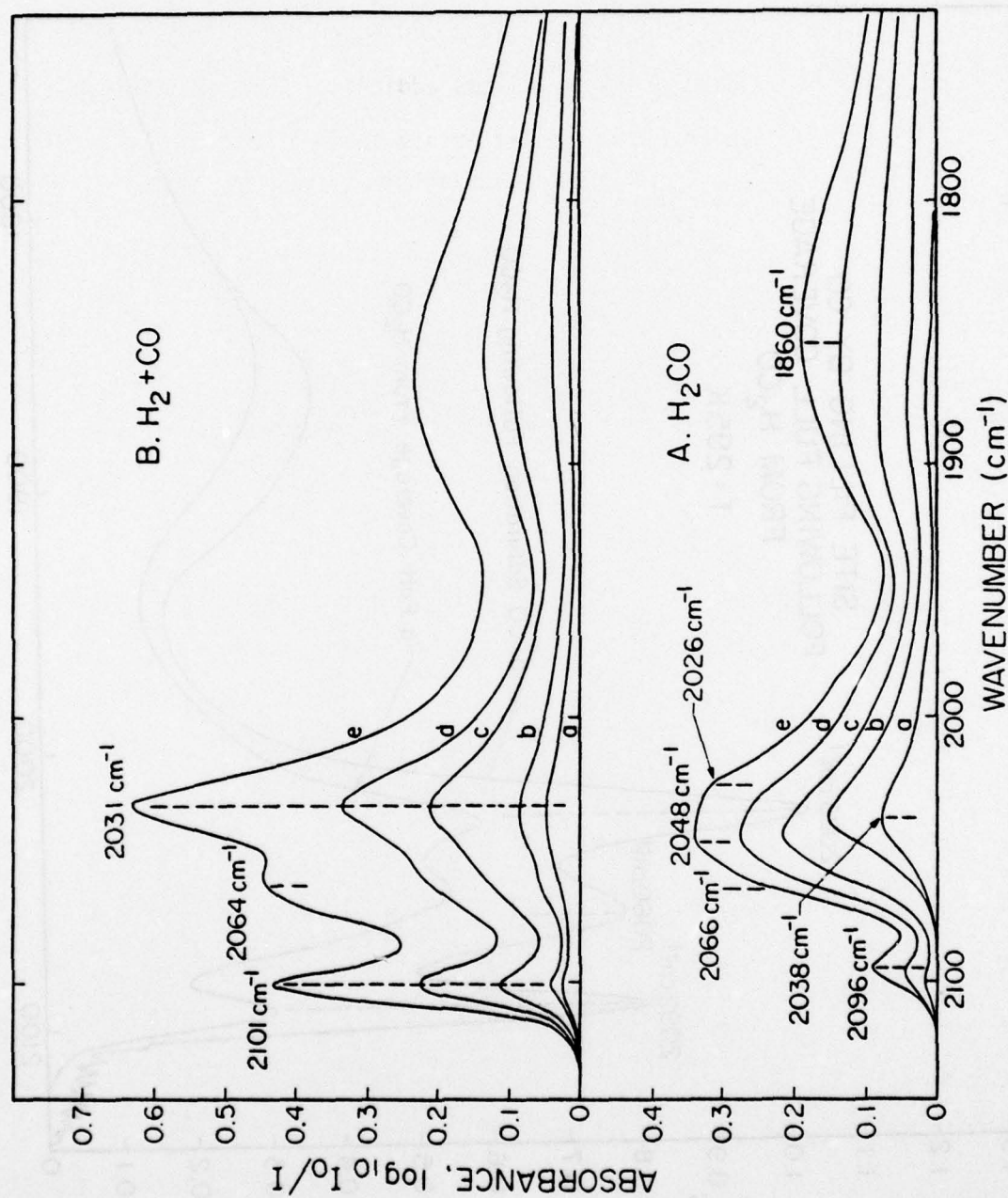


Figure 1

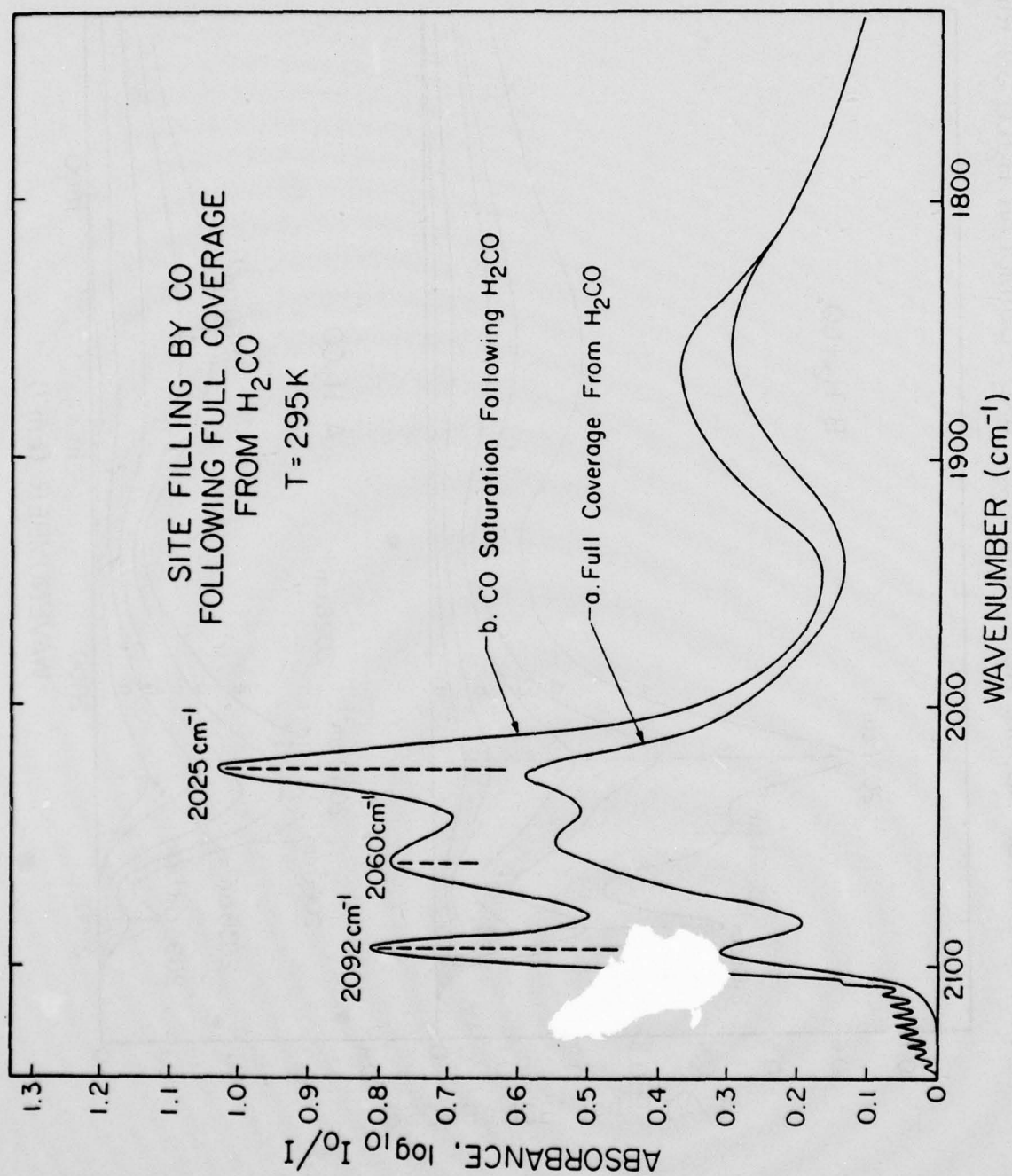


Figure 2



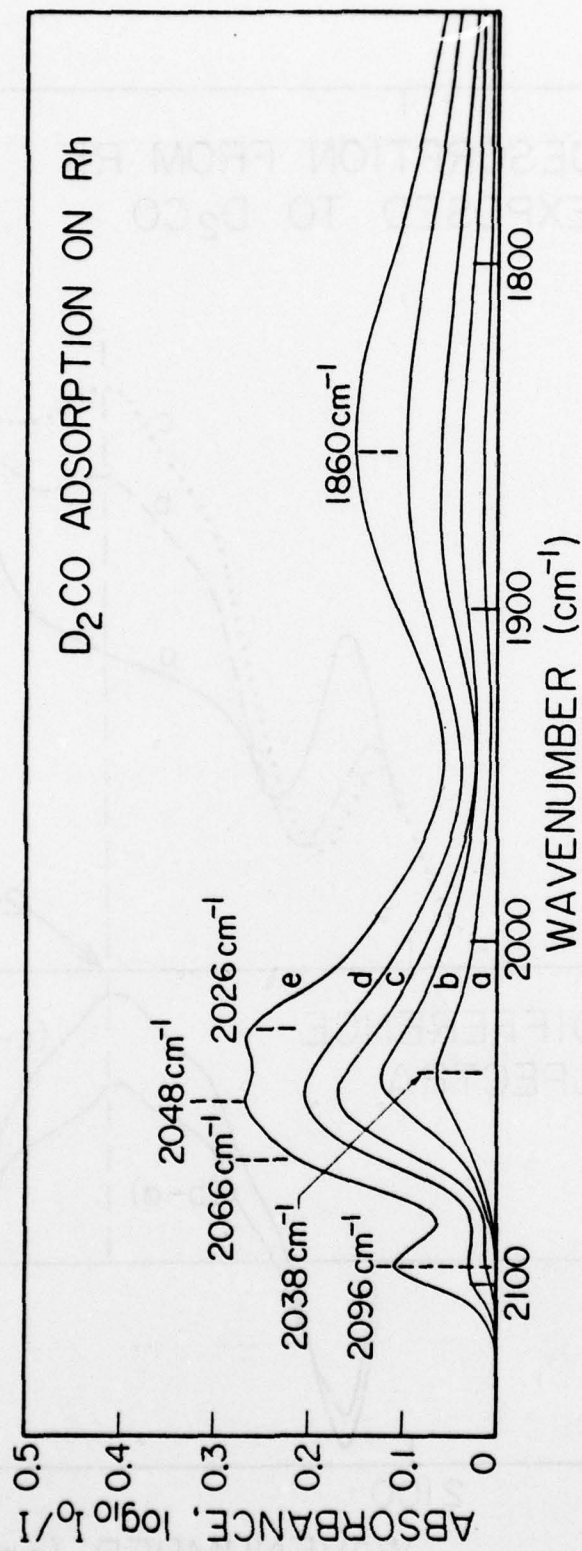


Figure 3

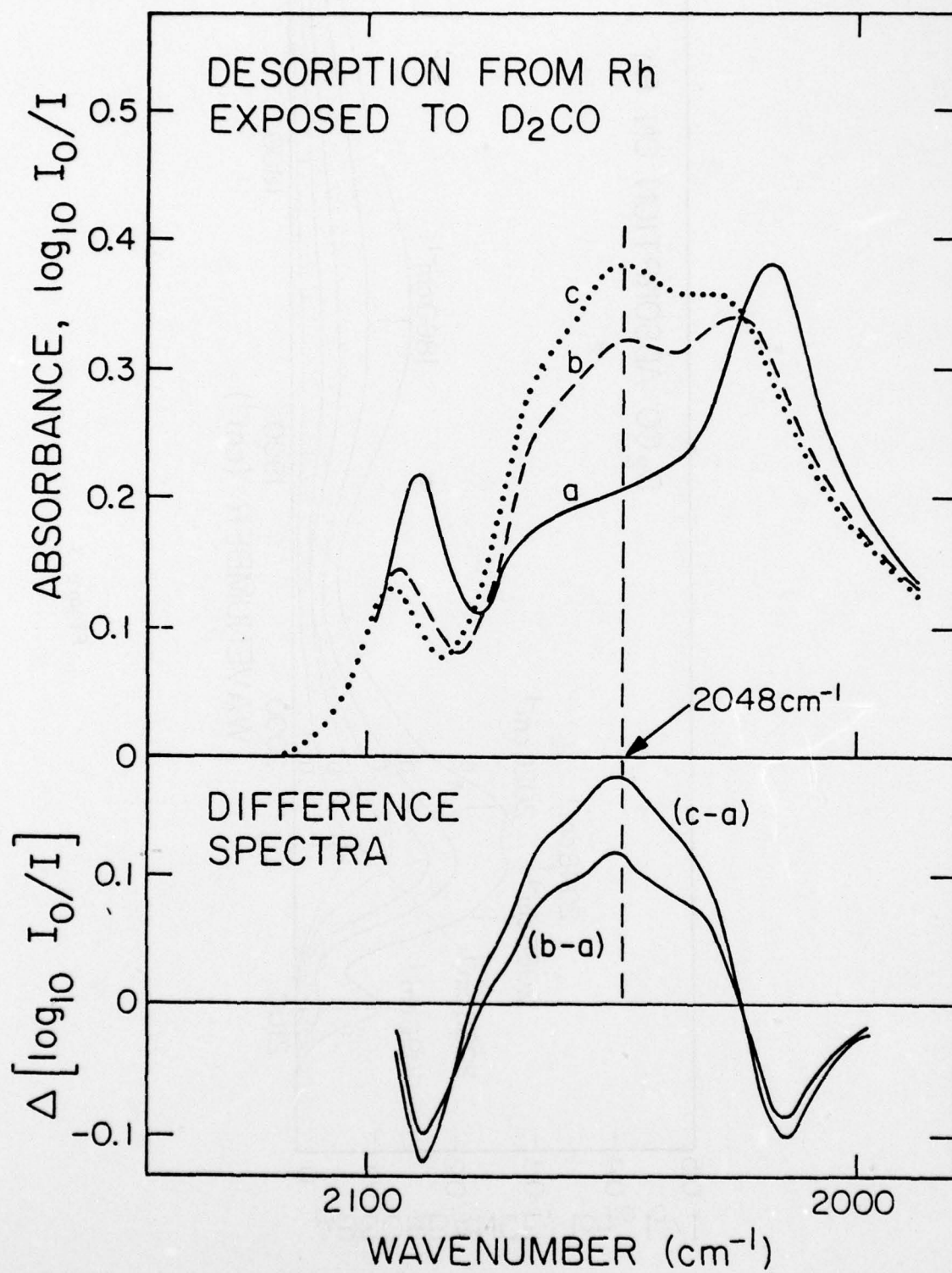


Figure 4